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Developing Partnerships Between Law Enforcement and American Muslim, Arab, and Sikh Communities: The Greater Boston Experience Follow Up Case Study

Debbie A. Ramirez
Northeastern University

Sasha Cohen O'Connell
Northeastern University

Rabia Zafar
Northeastern University

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The Partnering for Prevention & Community Safety Initiative

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The Greater Boston Experience
Follow Up Case Study

Open Society Institute

Northeastern University

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The Greater Boston Experience Follow Up Case Study

Deborah A. Ramirez
Sasha Cohen O'Connell
Rabia Zafar

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The Partnering for Prevention & Community Safety Initiative
Northeastern University
400 Huntington Ave
Boston, Massachusetts 02115-5000
www.ace.neu.edu/pfp

Tel: 617.373.4629
Fax: 617.373.5056

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We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this work. The findings and views expressed here are those of the PfP team and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of PfP partners, project participants, or funding entities. We accept sole responsibility for any errors.

DAR, SOC, RZ

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INTRODUCTION

In May of 2004, the Partnering for Prevention and Community Safety Initiative (PfP) published "Developing Partnerships Between Law Enforcement and American Muslim, Arab, and Sikh Communities: A Promising Practices Guide,"[1] which included a case study of the Greater Boston Region.[2] The 2004 research revealed an interest in developing systemic partnerships between the Boston area's Muslim, Arab, and Sikh American communities and federal, state, and local law enforcement focused on improving strategies for terrorism and hate crime prevention. However, the 2004 research also demonstrated that such partnerships had not been institutionalized at the time of the study.[3]

Between 2004 and 2005 a number of events occurred locally that had the potential to impact change in the state of community-law enforcement relationships in the greater Boston area. These changes and their potential catalytic effect on systemic partnership development compelled the PfP research team to revisit the Boston area in 2005.

This 2005 case study is intended to serve as an update to last year's work and as an assessment of any changes that have occurred. Because of the short timeframe between the two case study snap shots, the two works should be read in conjunction with each other. Additionally, this case study is unlike previous PfP works because the PfP research team itself has been involved in the development of ongoing partnership efforts in the greater Boston area. Given, the unique circumstances surrounding the development of this case study, the conclusions found here are intended solely as fodder for conversations on both the importance of partnerships and the efficacy of various implementation models.

2004 – 2005 INTERIM HISTORY

A major change which occurred between 2004 and 2005 in the greater Boston area was the creation of the Boston Pilot Working Group. This group was established after the 2004 PfP Greater Boston area case study documented the disparity between the desire to achieve partnerships amongst law enforcement and community groups and the lack of programming targeted to achieve those partnerships. Specifically, after the case study was published in May 2004, area community members requested that the PfP research team help launch a pilot program focused on initiating systemic communication between community groups and law enforcement. This ongoing program is focused on exploring systems for communication and collaborative problem solving between federal, state, and local law enforcement and Muslim, Arab, and Sikh American communities in the area. Since the first Boston Pilot meeting in September 2004, which was an executive session attended by a variety of local Muslim, Arab, Sikh American, and civil liberties organizations and law enforcement executives including US Attorney Mike Sullivan, Attorney General Tom Reilly, FBI SAC Ken Kaiser, and Boston Police Department Commissioner Kathleen O'Toole, the group has continued to meet monthly. Currently, the group is working to identify and help fill gaps in relevant training for law enforcement. Additionally, at each meeting group members discuss any issues of concern and invite appropriate law enforcement or community representatives to help lead some of these discussions. While the group continues to be supported by PfP, group members themselves have begun to lead meetings and together the group decides the agenda, projects, events, and participation.[4]

Another significant event which occurred in the interim period between the two PfP greater Boston area case studies was the Democratic National Convention (DNC) held in Boston in July 2004. For some community groups, the DNC provided an opportunity to organize and bring together disparate community constituencies. National leaders from the Arab American Institute (AAI), for example, held a number of DNC related events in Boston and conducted large scale outreach to local Arab American community members and organizations.

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[1] Ramirez, O'Connell, Zafar, "Developing Partnerships Between Law Enforcement and American Muslim, Arab and Sikh Communities: A Promising Practices Guide," available at: www.ace.neu.edu/pfp.

[2] For the purposes of these studies, the Greater Boston area encompasses Suffolk, Middlesex, and Norfolk counties. According to US Census data from 2000, these three counties cover 1,282 square miles and have on average 16,000 people per square mile.

[3] While PfP's research did not find any institutionalized systems for partnership building, there were efforts on the part of various community and law enforcement groups to increase communication post-9/11. For example, the Office of Attorney General Tom Reilly was quick to respond to community concerns immediately after the attacks. For a summary of that office's post-9/11 response, see Appendix A.

[4] While open to all interested community and law enforcement representatives, the Boston Pilot Working Group has yet to publicize its activities or reach out to the media. When and if the group decides to become public, the PfP research team suggest an external study to measure the impact of the group's work.

These efforts resulted in 1) increased cohesion and collaboration among various Arab American community members and organizations in the area and 2) the creation of an AAI Boston- based liaison who proved to be a highly active and valuable member of the Boston Pilot Working Group.

The DNC also resulted in a number of procedural changes for Boston area law enforcement such as random bag searches by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. These changes were a response to the need for heightened security and coordination with outside federal law enforcement entities such as the Secret Service. These changes along with some highly publicized cases of apparent racial/religious profiling produced a generally negative reaction by many within the local Muslim, Arab, Sikh American, and civil rights communities. One such case was that of Sundeep Sahni, a Sikh Boston College student who was detained and questioned for seven hours by Secret Service agents housed at Boston College during the DNC.[5] The Secret Service agents questioned Sahni after receiving a call about suspicious activity, which turned out to be Sahni and two of his friends (one of whom was a visiting exchange student) taking pictures of the campus. According to Sahni, who wears a turban and full beard, during the seven hour interrogation, the agents searched him and his car, had him sign a release giving them access to his psychiatric records, and made derogatory remarks about his religious attire. Sahni worked with the Boston College administration and national Sikh American civil rights groups to request an apology from the Secret Service.

Another change that has primarily affected the Boston area Muslim community is the near completion of the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center (ISBCC) and the increased publicity surrounding it. In its 2004 Boston case study, PfP reported a series of negative news stories about the Islamic Society of Boston (ISB) by the Boston Herald. That reporting continued through 2005 and was picked up by other news outlets such as the local Fox station, WFXT-TV. The reporting led to a law suit against the Herald and WFXT-TV by a former ISB leader who was accused by both news organizations as having links to terrorism. Further, continuing construction and publicity of the new ISBCC prompted allegations of extremism within ISB and wrongdoing against the City of Boston from individuals and a website group called Citizens for Peace and Tolerance.[6] The group accused the city of undervaluing land for ISBCC construction.

RESEARCH METHODS

While previous PfP research has relied heavily on focus groups and interviews, research for this greater Boston area follow up case study was conducted both by interviews and anonymous surveys. [7] Using existing contacts throughout the Boston area, 275 surveys were distributed to both community leaders and law enforcement representatives. In order to broadly distribute surveys, Boston Pilot Working Group participants were used as vectors to distribute surveys to their community and law enforcement constituencies. This vector method of distribution was used to increase response rate by ensuring that potential respondents received surveys from known community and law enforcement leaders.

The surveys were anonymous and voluntary. When the surveys were given to Boston Pilot participants in July of 2005 to distribute, respondents were asked to return completed surveys to Northeastern University using the self addressed, postage paid envelopes that were provided. Of the 275 surveys distributed, the PfP research team received only 41 completed surveys, which is a 15% response rate. Since the response rate was so low, and due to the research team's involvement with the Boston Pilot and its participants, the survey results should not be seen as conclusive findings but rather as a jumping off point for conversation and further research. Further, every effort has been made to avoid over generalization regarding the relationships between Muslim, Arab, and Sikh American communities and law enforcement in the greater Boston area from what is clearly a limited sample.

[5] Ralph Ranalli, "Sikh Student Detained by Secret Service: BC Leader Says Beard, Turban Triggered Stop," *The Boston Globe*, 7/30/04.
[6] Andrea Estes, "Group's Website Challenges Mosque: Society Accused of Extremism," *The Boston Globe*, 10/5/04.
[7] Like the survey which was anonymous, for the purposes of this case study, interviews conducted by the PfP research team of community and law enforcement leaders will be used to supplement survey findings and inform research findings. Unlike previous PfP case studies, interview participants in this update to the Boston case study are not cited individually.

Of those who did respond, the following chart delineates their demography:

TABLE 1:
RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

	N	%
Male	33	80%
Female	8	20%
Arab	10	24%
Asian	1	2%
Black	6	15%
South Asian	8	20%
White	16	39%
Christian	14	34%
Muslim	17	44%
Sikh	0	-
Other*	8	21%

* Note: Other = Baptist, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, and no affiliation

Since there was an extremely low response rate for female respondents, no gender comparisons was made in this study. Additionally, it should be noted that the PfP research team did not receive any surveys from the Sikh American community. Finally, due to the low response rate, survey responses from all community members (religious leaders, community organizers, community members, members of civil rights organizations, and students) were aggregated for the purposes of comparing them with law enforcement (federal, state, and local) survey responses, which were similarly combined. To accomplish this, the affiliation variable was recoded as a dichotomous variable.[8]

[8] Community members' variable includes a combination of religious leader + community organizer + community member + member civil rights organization + students. Law enforcement variable includes a combination of local law enforcement + state law enforcement + fed-

TABLE 2:
DEMOGRAPHICS OF COMMUNITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONDENTS

	Community % (N)	Law Enforcement % (N)
Race*		
Arab	33% (7)	--
Asian	--	7% (1)
Black	14% (3)	20% (3)
White	24% (5)	67% (10)
Religious Affiliation*		
Christian	5% (1)	73% (11)
Muslim	74% (14)	--
Sikh	--	--
Other**	21% (4)	27% (4)

* Note: $p < .05$
** Note: Other includes Baptist, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, and no affiliation

There is a statistically significant difference in the racial and religious composition of the community and law enforcement members who responded to the survey. As depicted in Table 2, the community is largely minority while the law enforcement is a majority white. Seventy-four percent of the community respondents are Muslim while none of the law enforcement representatives were Muslim. However, 73% of law enforcement representatives identified as Christian compared to only 5% of community respondents.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Table 3 compares community and law enforcement responses to the general question of whether or not relationships between community and law enforcement groups are useful, in concept, at the national level and/or at the local/regional level.

TABLE 3:
USEFULMESS OF RELATIONSHIPS

	Community % (N)	Law Enforcement % (N)
Relationships at National Level		
Very Useful	35% (7)	36% (5)
Useful	25% (5)	50% (7)
Slightly Useful	30% (6)	14% (2)
Not Useful	10% (2)	--
Relationships at Local/Regional Level		
Very Useful	40% (8)	50% (7)
Useful	35% (7)	50% (7)
Slightly Useful	15% (3)	--
Not Useful	10% (2)	--

Based on the responses illustrated above, it is evident that the majority of all respondents believe that relationships are useful at both the federal level and at the local/regional level. Table 3 also suggests that the respondents believe that relationships at the local/regional level may be slightly more useful. Sixty percent of the community and 86% of law enforcement representatives reported they perceived relationships at a national level would be useful as compared to 75% of the community and 100% of the law enforcement representatives that reported thinking relationships at the local/regional level were useful.

Although the majority of all respondents reported that relationships are useful in concept, there are some differences between community and law enforcement perceptions. This is evident when comparing the percent of respondents who reported relationship as being not useful. None of the law enforcement representatives reported relationships at either level to be not useful. However, 10% of the community on each question reported that the respective relationships were not useful.

Table 4 summarizes community and law enforcement opinions relating to the potential impact relationships between either the community and federal law enforcement or the community and regional/local law enforcement could have on terrorism and hate crime prevention.

TABLE 4:
POTENTIAL IMPACT OF COMMUNITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT RELATIONSHIPS

	Community % (N)	Law Enforcement % (N)
Community-Federal Law Enforcement Relationships		
Impact on Terrorism Prevention		
Positive	65% (13)	85% (11)
Neutral	15% (5)	15% (2)
Negative	20% (4)	--
Impact on Hate Crime Prevention		
Positive	57% (12)	62% (8)
Neutral	24% (5)	31% (4)
Negative	19% (4)	7% (1)
Community- Local/Regional Law Enforcement Relationships		
Impact on Terrorism Prevention		
Positive	65% (13)	85% (11)
Neutral	25% (5)	15% (2)
Negative	10% (2)	--
Impact on Hate Crime Prevention		
Positive	71% (15)	79% (11)
Neutral	14% (3)	14% (2)
Negative	14% (3)	7% (1)

When comparing the overall perceptions in Table 4 it is evident that the majority of respondent reported that relationship between law enforcement and Muslim, Arab and Sikh American communities would have a positive impact on terrorism and hate crime prevention. It also indicates that a higher percentage of law enforcement than community members believe relationships would have a positive impact.

Additionally, Table 4 illustrates that as it relates to hate crime prevention, more community members believe that local/regional relationships have a positive impact than do federal relationships. This differential is not as evident when comparing federal and local/regional relationships impact on terrorism prevention.

TABLE 5:
IMPACT OF RELATIONSHIPS AS RELATED TO PERCEPTION OF USEFULNESS

	Positive % (N)	Neutral % (N)	Negative % (N)
Federal Relationships Impact on Terrorism Prevention			
Rating of relationships at a national level			
Very Useful	100% (13)	--	--
Useful	33% (9)	40% (3)	50% (2)
Slightly Useful	11% (3)	60% (3)	25% (1)
Not Useful	7% (2)	--	25% (1)
Federal Relationships Impact on Hate Crime Prevention			
Rating of relationship at a national level			
Very Useful	46% (10)	30% (3)	--
Useful	27% (6)	50% (5)	40% (2)
Slightly Useful	14% (3)	20% (2)	40% (2)
Not Useful	14% (3)	--	20% (1)
Local/Regional Relationships Impact on Terrorism Prevention*			
Rating of relationships at a local/regional level			
Very Useful	100% (13)	--	--
Useful	33% (9)	57% (4)	--
Slightly Useful	11% (3)	43% (3)	50% (1)
Not Useful	7% (2)	--	50% (1)
Local/Regional Relationships Impact on Hate Crime Prevention			
Rating of relationship at a local/regional level			
Very Useful	38% (11)	40% (2)	--
Useful	31% (9)	40% (2)	50% (2)
Slightly Useful	21% (6)	20% (1)	25% (1)
Not Useful	10% (3)	--	25% (1)

* Note: $p < .05$

Table 5 illustrates 100% of the individuals who reported national level relationships as very useful believe that both federal and local/regional relationships would have a positive impact. However, it is not as clear when examining hate crime prevention. Only 46% of those who reported federal relationships as useful thought that federal relationships would positively impact hate crime prevention. Similarly only 38% thought local/regional relationships would have a positive impact on hate crime prevention.

While previous tables have addressed survey respondent opinions about relationships and their impact in concept, the remaining tables summarize opinions about the specifics in the greater Boston area. Specifically, Table 6 summarizes respondents' opinions about both the presence and perceived value of relationships in the greater Boston area.

TABLE 6:
PERCEPTIONS OF RELATIONSHIPS BY AFFILIATION

	Community % (N)	Law Enforcement % (N)
Existence of Relationships Between Law Enforcement & Muslim, Arab, & Sikh Communities in Greater Boston *Prior* to 9/11		
Yes	5% (1)	21% (3)
No	38% (8)	21% (3)
Not sure	57% (12)	57% (12)
Existence of Relationships Between Law Enforcement Communities in Greater Boston *After* 9/11		
Yes	45% (9)	67% (10)
No	20% (4)	20% (4)
Not sure	35% (7)	13% (2)
Current Relationships Between Federal Law Enforcement & Muslim, Arab, & Sikh Communities		
Positive	5% (1)	21% (3)
Neutral	25% (5)	36% (5)
Negative	70% (14)	43% (6)
Current Relationships Between Local/State Law Enforcement & the Muslim, Arab, & Sikh Communities		
Positive	15% (3)	23% (3)
Neutral	30% (6)	54% (7)
Negative	55% (11)	23% (3)

Table 6 depicts how community members and law enforcement respondents perceive past and current relationships. Interestingly, 57% of both community members and law enforcement respondents were not sure whether there were relationships in the Greater Boston area before September 11th. A larger percentage of respondents reported knowing that relationships between law enforcement and Muslim, Arab, and Sikh Americans after September 11th. However, a smaller percentage of community members than of law enforcement representatives reported knowing that relationships exist.

Table 6 also illustrates that a larger percentage of law enforcement representatives believe that relationships between law enforcement, particularly within the federal level, and Muslim, Arab and Sikh Americans are positive. Seventy percent of community members reported that currently the relationship between the community and federal law enforcement is negative; whereas 55% of the community reported local/regional relationships as negative. Interestingly, 43% of law enforcement reported that federal relationships were negative as compared to only 23% reporting negative relationships between community and local/regional law enforcement.

BOSTON PILOT WORKING GROUP

As noted above, the PfP research team is involved in coordinating the Boston Pilot Working Group and used members of the group as vectors for disseminating this survey. Despite this methodology, only 33% of community members and 40% of law enforcement representatives reported knowledge of the program. Further, of the respondents who reported being aware of the Pilot, 70% felt it has at least some impact. Interestingly, 50% of the respondents who reported not being aware of the Pilot also felt it had at least some impact.

TABLE 7:
THE BOSTON PILOT

	Aware of Pilot Project % (N)	Unaware of Pilot Project % (N)
Impact of Boston Pilot on community-law enforcement relationships in MA		
Large impact	8% (1)	7% (1)
Some impact	62% (8)	43% (6)
No impact	31% (4)	50% (7)

DISCUSSION OF SURVEY FINDINGS

As mentioned above, the PfP research team realizes the limits of this survey-based research methodology and has made every effort to avoid generalizations in the research findings. The discussion below is therefore intended simply as a starting point from which further thought, dialogue, and research will spring.

Based on the PfP research team's experience working with local community members and law enforcement representatives, the vector model was presumably the most effective method of survey distribution. Despite distributing surveys through known community and law enforcement leaders however, the surveys yielded a very low response rate. One possible explanation for this low response rate, especially for the community groups, could be the fact that the vectors used were all active members of the Boston Pilot Working Group. These members maintain full time jobs, attend working group meetings in the evening, and tend to be involved in a host of working group and other community initiatives. Unlike in some other PfP research sites such as Southern California and Washington, DC, there are very few Boston area community leaders employed to work full time at community organizations. There are, therefore many demands on these leaders' time and could explain their inability to distribute PfP surveys and follow up with their community constituencies. For example, PfP received no completed surveys from the Sikh American community despite the fact that one of the most active members of the Boston Pilot is a representative from the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF).

The use of the vector method could also explain the low female response rate. The Boston Pilot Working Group is composed primarily of male participants. This fact may have influenced the gender of the respondents. Another reason for the small number of female respondents may be the generally low number of females in law enforcement.

Despite the limited response a number of notable patterns did emerge from the survey data. First, conceptually, both community and law enforcement respondents to the survey recognize the usefulness of building relationships between the Muslim, Arab, and Sikh American communities and law enforcement both regionally and nationally. The data also shows that, while small, a portion of community respondents did report seeing no utility in these relationships while no law enforcement respondents reported similar sentiments. This survey finding is consistent with the sentiment expressed to the PfP research team during interviews.

Federal, state, and local law enforcement interviewed for this study uniformly reported a desire to develop relationships with Muslim, Arab, and Sikh communities seeing these relationships as an operational necessity for effectively preventing and responding to hate crimes and terrorism. On the community side, study participants were more diverse in their views and, even when supportive of relationship development in concept, often community members expressed concern over the complexities embodied in implementing such relationships as well as potential pitfalls. The following are two community respondents' views as expressed in the comment/suggestions section of the survey which demonstrate this point:

"The premise of this program [The Boston Pilot Working Group] makes sense. What everyone seems to forget is that law enforcement seems more willing to 'partner' with the Arab and Muslim communities to get information rather than ensure safety and security. With the <u>national</u> directives as they stand it is virtually impossible for local law enforcement to act independently. So the cycle continues, the Arabs and Muslims remain scared and opportunities are lost. Law enforcement must be willing to admit that information is important and the wrong of rampant individuals is not indicative of how a whole community will act."

-Anonymous community survey respondent.

"The elements of society that perpetuate terrorism and hate crime both do so without consent or knowledge of their communities. How would interaction between community and law enforcement help? A line of communication should be open, but based on my experiences with law enforcement/FBI, they seem to be completely shooting in the dark. They suspect everyone who looks a certain way, rather then going on actual intelligence to narrow their searches. The community feels less safe due to their efforts. And the scariest part is that they are looking to the community for information? With all the intelligence and surveillance of law enforcement, what could we possibly do for them? They are the ones with the most information but the easiest information for them to consider is skin color. Most of us are already ready to help law enforcement in any way if we see a threat. But they should be seeing the threats through intelligence and informing us what to look for."

-Anonymous community survey respondent.

Like the findings relating to overall usefulness of relationships, a majority of both law enforcement and community respondents felt that establishing relationships could have a positive impact on both hate crime and terrorism prevention at the national and regional/local levels. Like the findings for overall utility however, law enforcement was fairly uniform in its positive response to this question while the reticence of some community members and their mixed feelings about the utility of relationships which was expressed during interviews was again evident.

When talking about the specifics of the greater Boston area, community concerns become even more evident. As illustrated in Table 6, seventy percent of community members reported that currently in Boston the relationships that exist between the community and federal law enforcement is negative and 55% of the community reported local/regional relationships as negative in Boston as well. Interestingly unlike their nearly homogeneous support for partnerships in concept, when discussing the current situation in Boston, the uniformity of law enforcement responses begins to deteriorate. Specifically, when addressing existing relationships in the greater Boston area, 43% of law enforcement reported that existing federal relationships were negative and 23% reported negative relationships existing between community and local/regional law enforcement.

In addition to measuring attitudes and perceptions about the utility of partnerships both in concept and in practice in Boston, survey respondents were asked about their knowledge of partnership efforts before September 11th; after September 11th and about the Boston Pilot Working Group in particular. Interestingly, 57% of both community members and law enforcement respondents were not sure whether there were relationships in the Greater Boston area before September 11th. While a larger percentage of respondents reported knowing that relationships between law enforcement and Muslim, Arab, and Sikh American communities were initiated after September 11, considering the heightened national attention to issues related to hate crime and terrorism prevention during this timeframe, the number of respondents reporting knowledge of the existence of relationships is still relatively low (45% of community respondents and 67% of law enforcement respondents).

In terms of responses to questions about the Boston Pilot Working Group, only 33% of community members and 40% of law enforcement representatives reported knowledge of the program. These indicators of the public's knowledge about the Boston Pilot are not only low but further they potentially over represent the general population's knowledge given the reliance on Boston Pilot Participants to distribute surveys. There are a number of potential explanations for the lack of knowledge about the Pilot Project even among individuals connected to project participants. First, as noted above, distributing information about the work of the group is particularly difficult on the community side because community leaders involved in the Pilot by-in-large work full time jobs, hold leadership positions in community organizations, and make time to participate in the Boston Pilot. This leaves active members with little time to formally and regularly brief their constituencies on the progress of the group. Further, again as noted above, because of the sensitivity of the issues taken on by the members of the Boston Pilot in their regular meetings to-date no media coverage of this work has been sought which makes wide spread education about their work challenging.

Finally, while many respondents reported no knowledge of the Boston Pilot Working Group, interestingly, 50% of the respondents who reported not being aware of the Pilot also felt it had at least some impact. This somewhat anomalous finding can perhaps be attributed to the general positive view of efforts to build relationship expressed both in interviews and through the surveys as previously discussed.

CONCLUSION

As noted at length previously, there was a limited sample size available for this study. Further, no survey data was gathered on perceptions and attitudes about relationships during the 2004 case study and there is therefore no precise baseline against which to compare the 2005 data. Because of these factors, this work is most valuable if utilized as an element of an ongoing national dialogue on relationship development and not seen as conclusive findings. .

That being said, what does seem apparent from the data that was collected is that despite significant relevant events since the 2004 study, like in 2004, both community and law enforcement leaders in the greater Boston area support developing relationships for the purposes of hate crime and terrorism prevention and response. Similarly, as was demonstrated by the anecdotal evidence collected in 2004, the data shows that when discussing actually partnership efforts, both community and law enforcement do express concern about the complexities and potential pitfalls of these initiatives. The dichotomy between the conceptual interest in pursuing relationships and the concerns implementation raises creates a dynamic environment which existed in Boston in 2004 and continues to persist today. This environment offers great potential for the establishment of systemic, institutionalized relationships that could have a significant impact on hate crimes and terrorism prevention and response strategies. However, in order to achieve such gains, community and law enforcement leaders must prioritize relationships not only in concept but also in practice. This requires willingness for all parties to make a good faith effort to address the multiplicity of complexities and challenges which arise from pursuing these relationships.

APPENDIX A

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL TOM REILLY
Summary of Post-September 11th Activities
September 2001 to 2003

RESPONSE OF AFTERMATH OF TERROR ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

The terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, altered and refocused the work of the Task Force and its members. Law enforcement and community leaders, including many members of the Attorney General's Hate Crimes Task Force, directed much of their attention to addressing the repercussions of the tragic events of September 11th.

The Attorney General's Hate Crimes Task Force is comprised of about 100 federal, state, and local law enforcement officials and prosecutors, community leaders, civil rights advocates, human rights commission leaders, victim assistance professionals, hate crime researchers, civil rights trainers, educators, school diversity/tolerance curriculum specialists, and others who have been working on hate crime related issues locally, statewide or nationally. It was first established in 1994. Attorney General Reilly expanded its membership in 1999 to include a diverse group of community members from throughout the Commonwealth. The Task Force's mission is to enhance federal, state, and local law enforcement and community collaboration in addressing hate crimes in Massachusetts. The broadly representative Task Force allows law enforcement, community leaders, advocates and others to work together more effectively to coordinate hate crime prosecution, prevention, training and education programs in Massachusetts.

INITIAL RESPONSE TO THE TRAGIC EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

In addition to the tremendous grief and sense of loss following September 11th, we as a nation were presented with a challenge to our unity as a diverse people. There were people, including some in Massachusetts, who reacted to the tragedy with misplaced anger, and attempted to blame innocent members of the Arab, Muslim, Sikh and South Asian communities for the horrific acts of the terrorists--for no other reason than they were, or were perceived to be, of the same ethnicity or religion as the terrorists.

Immediately after the September 11th attacks, Attorney General Reilly, along with various District Attorneys and police chiefs, the U.S. Attorney and representatives of the FBI sponsored a series of meetings between law enforcement and leaders of the Arab, Muslim, South Asian, and Sikh communities. Attorney General Reilly convened the meetings to assure these community leaders that law enforcement would strictly enforce Massachusetts civil rights protections against hate crimes and harassment, to encourage community leaders to report hate crime-related incidents to local police and the Attorney General's Civil Rights Division, and to foster better communication between law enforcement and community members.

Attorney General Reilly, many other law enforcement leaders, and Task Force members publicly and repeatedly declared that they would not tolerate any hate motivated targeting of any individual. They also made clear that violence and harassment against Arab, South Asian, Sikh, and Muslim Americans were inconsistent with the principles upon which our nation is based.

Despite strong public statements by law enforcement and other community leaders against the targeting of members of the Arab, Muslim, South Asian, and Sikh communities, there was a dramatic spike in anti-Arab and anti-Muslim incidents. Law enforcement acted swiftly against those who exploited the national tragedy of September 11th to harass or discriminate against persons who are, or who are perceived to be, of Arab or South Asian descent or who belong to the Muslim or Sikh faith. While a rapid and strong law enforcement response to hate crimes and hate-motivated activity was necessary, law enforcement recognized that it was not enough, and that enforcement would ultimately be unsuccessful unless members of these communities were willing to report their victimization and felt free to leave their homes. Law enforcement and many community-based Task Force members then coupled this law enforcement response with a comprehensive strategy of community outreach and education.

The tragic events of September 11th and their aftermath highlighted the need to build stronger, more permanent bonds between representatives of communities targeted by a post-September 11th backlash and the existing network of individuals and organizations dedicated to civil rights protection and hate crimes enforcement. The close collaboration between law enforcement and community leaders of Arab, Muslim, South Asian and Sikh communities since September 11th laid the groundwork for ongoing, permanent relationships

between law enforcement and these communities to ensure the most effective response to incidents of bias-motivated hate, harassment and discrimination. Law enforcement continues to work closely with these community leaders to monitor and respond quickly to complaints of hate crimes and discrimination.

AGGRESSIVE ENFORCEMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS

In cooperation with local and state law enforcement, the Attorney General and District Attorneys aggressively investigated allegations of post-September 11th hate and harassment, and successfully pursued civil rights enforcement actions, through civil rights injunctions and prosecutions, against persons who allegedly perpetrated hate crimes against Muslims or persons of Middle Eastern and South Asian descent. For example, the Attorney General's Civil Rights Division successfully obtained civil rights injunctions in seven separate cases under the Massachusetts Civil Rights Act (MCRA) against persons who had allegedly targeted individuals because they believed the victims were Arab, Muslim, or of Middle Eastern or South Asian descent, although in some of the cases they were not. District Attorneys' offices and the United States Attorney's Office also investigated and pursued prosecutions for hate crime allegedly perpetrated against Muslims or persons of Middle Eastern and South Asian descent.

ENSURING A COORDINATED LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE

Federal, state and local law enforcement communicate regularly with each other and with community leaders to respond most effectively to any hate crimes that occur. Law enforcement worked with other state and federal civil rights enforcement entities and regularly consulted and shared information on post-September 11th efforts. For example, the Attorney General's Civil Rights Division met with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination to coordinate communication and enforcement efforts on employment, housing, and public accommodation complaints, and with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to discuss post-September 11th issues and strategies.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY LEADERS

In responding to the aftermath of September 11th events, it was important that law enforcement be made aware of all incidents of hate and harassment and addressed the needs and the security concerns of the community. Through both formal meetings and informal, regular contact with community leaders, law enforcement obtained useful ideas for successfully reaching out to the Arab, Muslim, South Asian and Sikh communities in Massachusetts. Law enforcement and community leaders worked together to organize outreach and training opportunities for law enforcement, educators, and community members.

PROVIDING COMMUNITY EDUCATION TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO HATE AND BIAS

Law enforcement, educators, and community members worked together to inform residents of Massachusetts about their right to be free of hate and harassment, to teach children the values of tolerance and respect, and to build relationships between communities and local law enforcement officials. Although efforts immediately after September 11th focused on the backlash against persons who are, or are perceived to be, Arab, Muslim, South Asian, or Sikh, the message is a universal one that applies equally to all.

On April 20, 2002, the Lowell Police Department, the Attorney General's Office, the Middlesex County District Attorney's Office, and representatives from the Arab and Muslim communities in Lowell participated in a "Symposium on Addressing Hate Crimes, Discrimination, and Harassment." Law enforcement representatives spoke about hate crimes against members of the Arab and Islamic-American community, as well as discrimination and harassment in the workplace, and how community members can recognize and prevent hate, discrimination and harassment.

Language can also be a barrier in educating community members about their civil rights. The Attorney General's Office published brochures in Arabic, Farsi and Hindi that inform people of their rights and how to identify, report, and respond to hate crimes, harassment and discrimination, and distributed them to community leaders and organizations.

COMMUNICATING POLICE CONTACT INFORMATION TO COMMUNITY LEADERS

Many local police departments have designated a Civil Rights Liaison Officer to handle civil rights and hate crimes allegations. The Attorney General's office contacted local police departments in the approximately 65 cities and towns in Massachusetts that have significant Arab, South Asian, Sikh, and Muslim populations to update the list of the names and addresses of their Civil Rights Liaison Officers. Attorney General Reilly then sent each of these Civil Rights Liaison Officers a list of Arab, Muslim, South Asian or Sikh community contacts and distributed the list of police liaisons to those community leaders.

SPONSORING HATE CRIME TRAINING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

A coalition of law enforcement and community-based organizations represented on the Task Force sponsored and participated in a series of specialized training programs for law enforcement officers to enhance their efforts in preventing and combating hate crimes after September 11th.

The Statewide Hate Crimes Training Team (whose members include representatives from the Attorney General's Office, the Community Relations Service of the U.S. Department of Justice, the United States Attorney's Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Community Disorders Unit of the Boston Police Department, the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, the Islamic community, and the Anti-Defamation League) sponsored a hate crimes training program in Salem on December 6, 2001, for police officers from municipal and college police departments on the North Shore. The training program used the national hate crimes training module for state and local law enforcement officers, with modifications to address the special issues and challenges following September 11th.

The Statewide Hate Crimes Training Team sponsored, along with the Waltham Police Department, a regional hate crimes training program for police officers from municipal and college police departments in the Metro West Region on April 16th, 2002, with emphasis on the aftermath of September 11th.

The Statewide Hate Crimes Training Team also sponsored a training program at the Norwood Police Academy Training Facility for Civil Rights Liaison Officers from approximately 65 local police departments on April 24, 2002, to address post-September 11th issues of concern for the Arab, Muslim, South Asian and Sikh communities in Massachusetts.

WORKING WITH EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS TO PREVENT HARASSMENT AND HATE CRIMES IN SCHOOLS

In developing a comprehensive plan to address hate crimes in the Commonwealth, Task Force members emphasized the need to help educators prevent and respond to harassment and hate-motivated violence in their schools. Attorney General Reilly's Office, in conjunction with members of his Hate Crimes Task Force, the local District Attorneys' offices, the Massachusetts Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Education sponsored a series of daylong regional conferences across the state titled, "A Prerequisite For Safe Schools: Protecting Students from Harassment and Hate." The conferences included recognized national and statewide experts in hate crimes and harassment in schools, school violence and school-community partnerships, and provided participants with the tools they need to prevent and respond to harassment before it escalates into a hate crime. The series of conferences provided practical, step-by-step guidance to help prevent harassment and promote civil rights in our schools. The regional conferences, prompted by an escalation in school-based hate crimes, was part of the Task Force's efforts to promote safe and welcoming schools for the state's students.

The training conferences used national civil rights in schools manual, "Protecting Students from Harassment and Hate Crime: A Guide for Schools," published in 1999, to train conference participants. The manual was the result of a national initiative co-chaired by the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General, and is a joint publication of the National Association of Attorneys General and the Office of Civil Rights of the US Department of Education.

The first in the series of statewide regional training conferences was held in November, 2000 in Northampton for approximately 200 educators, administrators, and law enforcement officers from throughout Western Massachusetts. The second training conference was held in Framingham in February, 2000, to provide guidance to about 200 educators from 26 school districts educators from Essex, Middlesex and Suffolk counties to help them prevent and respond to harassment and violence in their schools. The trainers augmented the ongoing series of regional training conferences for Massachusetts educators with training programs specifically focused on bias against Arab-Americans, Muslims, Sikhs, and South Asians and teaching students, teachers,

and administrators how to prevent acts of hate against adult and students members from these communities. The conferences provided practical step-by-step guidance for schools to promote civil rights and prevent harassment in schools, with a particular focus on preventing religious, cultural and ethnic harassment after September 11th.

Approximately 300 administrators, teachers, counselors, school professionals, and student leaders from over 60 school districts in Norfolk and Worcester Counties attended the third regional training conference, held in Milford in October, 2001. In March 2002, over 150 educators and law enforcement officials from 34 school districts in Bristol, Barnstable and Plymouth counties attended the fourth regional conference.

A number of participants from school district who attended one of the regional training conferences on hate and harassment in schools, also attended two recent follow-up workshops titled, "Protecting Students from Harassment and Hate Crimes: Next Steps in Implementing an Action Plan For Schools." Representatives from 10 eastern Massachusetts school districts participated in the first workshop in Boston on February 27, 2003. A second workshop was held on April 10, 2003, in Springfield where representatives from 13 central and western Massachusetts school districts participated. Additional workshops are planned. The workshops were held to (1) offer educators additional technical assistance, at a time of increasing reports of harassment and hate crimes in schools; (2) remind educators of the continued importance of addressing these issues, even at a time of budgetary constraints and other educational challenges; (3) provide ongoing guidance, advice and assistance to educators; and (4) afford educators a further opportunity to learn from and inspire one another. The workshops focused on post-September 11th related civil rights, harassment and hate crime issues.

OUTNUMBER THE HATE CAMPAIGN

Early in 2002, a coalition of agencies and organizations, including many members of the Task Force, came together to participate in the *Outnumber the Hate Campaign*, standing up to acts of hate, prejudice, and intolerance. The coalition, including the Islamic Society of Boston, the Anti-Defamation League of New England, the Attorney General's Office, the Governor's Task Force on Hate Crimes, the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, and the Rendon Group, pledged to confront the nearly 1,700 reported acts of hate and discrimination perpetrated nationwide against Muslims, Arabs and others who are or are perceived to be members of these groups.

The coalition asked students from across Massachusetts to create over 1,700 messages promoting respect, diversity, and tolerance. With the assistance of hundreds of students, teachers, and schools from across Massachusetts, the campaign reached this initial campaign goal and celebrated with an art exhibit and press conference at the State House on September 24, 2002. Speakers included Attorney General Reilly, the Secretary of the Executive Office of Public Safety, a representative from the Islamic Society, students and a teacher.

INCORPORATION OF COMMUNITY LEADERS INTO ONGOING PROGRAMS AND GROUPS

At the Task Force meeting on October 9, 2002, Attorney General Reilly formally announced the expansion of the Task Force to include the appointment of four representatives from the Arab, Muslim, Hindu, South Asian and Sikh communities. Their membership and active participation in the Task Force reinforces the message that we are united against hate. Our coalition is most successful when we speak out against all hate crimes in a unified voice, regardless of the race, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, disability, or religion of the victim.